



The Monthly Messenger for September 2020

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PASTORAL TEAM

Initial Contact & Co-ordinator -
Joyce Ashworth
Members -

Abi Elliott-McGuffie, Dorothy Jones, Helen Illingworth
& Margaret Salt

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Paul Hubbard

FLOWER FUND SECRETARIES

Edna & John Wood
53 Links View, Rochdale OL11 4DD

SAFEGUARDING TEAM

Co-ordinator - Joyce Ashworth
Member - Helen Illingworth

PUBLICITY TEAM

Messenger Notices

Joyce Ashworth & Helen Illingworth

Messenger Publication and Distribution

Paul Hubbard

Website Manager

Diane Bennett

CONTACT DETAILS

Paul Hubbard Tel 07884 123 169
Email: rochdaleunitarian@outlook.com

Joyce Ashworth Tel: 01706 659294
Email: joyce.ashworth9@gmail.com

Diane Bennett Tel: 01706 371518
Email: diane119@hotmail.com

Helen & John Illingworth Tel: 01706 649015
Email: helen@illingworth.org.uk
Email: john@illingworth.org.uk

Margaret Salt Tel: 01706 852575

Margaret Shore Tel: 01706 360883

John & Edna Wood Tel 01706 645252
Email: jonwud@tiscali.co.uk

CHURCH TELEPHONE - 01706 648461

SEPTEMBER Flowers

ASTER

SEPTEMBER BIRTH FLOWER



**Wisdom
Faith
Valour**



September's birth flower is the aster which is said to represent both love and daintiness. The flowers are also associated with wisdom, valour and faith, making them a great choice for dear friends and family members.

Reminiscent of a daisy, the aster is named after the Greek word for 'star' and, if you look at the shape of the flower, it's clear to see why.

These delightful flowers bloom all year round and are one of the most vibrant in the autumn months, making them the perfect choice for a September birthday.

100 CLUB WINNERS

AUG 2020

1st	19	John Wood
2nd	67	Martin Whyment
3rd	44	Ann Shepherd

Congratulations

Prizes- 1st £30 - 2nd £15 - 3rd £5

Adopt an Orphaned 100 Club number and win:

6, 15, 21, 26, 31, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 53, 54, 57, 59, 63, 72, 76, 77, 78, 80, 90, 92, 93, 94

It costs just £12 per number to enter, with a draw taking place once a month. If you are lucky enough to be a winner, your numbers go back in for the following draw, so you can win as many times as your chosen numbers come out of the bag!

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the September edition! There's lots packed-in this issue, so I'll kept it short. This issue contains two beautiful eulogies to Donald Smith and Brian Nuttall, re-published here in full (pgs 8-9, 10-11). Thanks to Joyce for her WL letter and spiritual message for this month, Helen for the excellent book report, and — my favourite — the "Back in the Days" poem. Enjoy!



NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S AUTUMN MESSAGE TO ALL WOMEN'S LEAGUE MEMBERS

Although little has been happening in the way of activities it seems time that you heard from me once again and I send my very warmest greetings to each and every one of you along with this message.

It is Saturday morning, 8th August, and I am sat having breakfast on my sunny patio as I start to pen this summer/autumn message. I am "mask-free" and enjoying inhaling the refreshing early morning air. The birds are singing and I am absorbing wafts of perfume from a potted lily at the side of me —



"starburst", bright pink and crowded with flowers. It is as if the gardens are flouncing their final exuberance before autumn's inevitable decline. I'm pondering an interesting comparison — my neighbour's tall, strong hollyhocks of which he is justly proud and a miniscule self-planted pansy

which has been resolutely turning its tiny beautiful face to the sun for simply days and days. I have to admire its bold claim to life! It has enchanted me and given me such pleasure as we in Rochdale, as part of Greater Manchester have been plunged into



a further partial lockdown with continuing grim news of rising virus cases and further deaths. I wonder how your congregations and community groups have fared? With another death added this week, we have now lost six people with close connections to Rochdale Church, two of which were Women's League members. Admittedly, apart from one, they were all in their 80s or 90s, but still too many in a 4-month period. Rather hard not to, but I mustn't go down this route — I am supposed to be cheering you all up!

I wonder if any of you have been brave enough to venture on some kind of holiday break. I have briefly thought about it and longed to do so, but promptly abandoned the idea. Perhaps more of a possibility when schools return and hopefully crowds diminish

as we edge into autumn. The signs are just beginning to show — I can see a Rowan tree from my kitchen window and note the berries ripening. This is the time when trees, in particular come into their own, reflecting the changing season with such magnificent, colourful foliage. Autumn, that gorgeously mellow fruitful season, for me comes second only to Spring — possibly because with Spring you know that Summer with all its promise will follow, whereas Winter inevitably follows Autumn; not that winter does not offer its own delights but it can at times feel very long and dark.

So what of Women's League news? As you can imagine, with current restrictions on movement and activities I have little to report except cancellations and the sending of condolence messages. Disappointing for everyone has been the necessity to cancel centenary celebrations by the Women's League Branch at Bolton, Bank Street, arranged for mid-September. The difficult decision has also been made to cancel the Triennial Meeting, which was to have been held at Whalley Abbey in October. It was distressing to learn that with no activities envisaged during this year, employment for the staff at the Abbey has had to be terminated.

Since my Spring message to you, I was pleased to send, on your behalf, a congratulatory card to Marion Davies of the SE Wales branch for her 100th birthday at the end of March. I also wrote messages of condolence to, among others, the family of Rev Daphne Roberts, a past national Women's League President, and to the daughter of Mavis Duerden a member of our Nelum branch. Sadly, both of these members died of natural causes in April but they had each passed their 90th birthdays and had lived loyal, active and useful lives, contributing greatly to their local communities.

I realise that not all Women's Leaguers will have access to the internet, so do please raise awareness of the existence of this communication and share the essence of my message with as many of your members as possible until publication of our League Letter resumes.

I will close with the slightly adapted words written recently by my Ministry student, Laura Dobson:

Even though we cannot touch hand to hand,
May we keep touching heart to heart.
May you know love, within and without,
And may you flourish and flower like the incredible
beings you are.
Go well, all of you, in the weeks ahead.

Joyce

Joyce's September Spiritual contribution:

In this time of continuing lockdown words Jeff Foster to perhaps awaken us to our abundance:



"Abundance is not the money you have in your bank account, the trophies on your shelf, the letters after your name, the list of goals reached, the number of people you know, your perfect healthy body, your adoring fans!

Abundance is your connection to each breath, how sensitive you are to every flicker of sensation and emotion in your body. It is the delight with which you savour each unique moment, the joy with which you greet each new day. It is knowing yourself as presence, the power that creates and moves worlds. It is your open heart, how deeply moved you are by love every day, your willingness to embrace, to hold what needs to be held. It is the freshness of each morning, unencumbered by memory or false hope."

Helen's Book Circle Report:

At our August meeting we discussed *The Body in the Dales* by J R Ellis. This was a 'light' murder mystery, the body being found in a pothole in a beautiful Dales village. There were a number of suspects as the victim was not well liked and the three detectives on the case were a likeable team. However, it did seem impossible to crack as the body was found in such an inaccessible place. I won't go into more details but we all felt it was one to recommend.

For the September meeting our book is *The Botanist's Daughter* by Kayte Nunn, a tale of two female botanists, separated by more than a century, in a race to discover a life-saving flower. In Victorian England, headstrong adventuress Elizabeth takes up her late father's quest for a rare, miraculous plant. Anna finds a mysterious metal box containing a sketchbook, a photograph inscribed 'Spring 1886' and a small bag of seeds. It sets her on a journey that will force her to face her own demons.

We meet on Zoom: Monday 14th Sept 7.30 pm.
New members always welcome!

BACK IN THE DAYS

Back in the days of tanners and bobs,
When Mothers had patience and Fathers had jobs.

When football team families wore hand me down shoes,
And T.V gave only two channels to choose.

Back in the days of three penny bits,
when schools employed nurses to search for your nits.
When snowballs were harmless; ice slides were permitted
and all of your jumpers were warm and hand knitted.

Back in the days of hot ginger beers,
when children remained so for more than six years.
When children respected what older folks said,
and pot was a thing you kept under your bed.

Back in the days of Listen with Mother,
when neighbours were friendly and talked to each other.
When cars were so rare you could play in the street.
When Doctors made house calls and Police walked the beat.

Back in the days of Milligan's Goons,
when butter was butter and songs all had tunes.
It was dumplings for dinner and trifle for tea,
and your annual break was a day by the sea.

Back in the days of Dixon's Dock Green,
Crackerjack pens and Lyons ice cream.
When children could freely wear National Health glasses,
and teachers all stood at the FRONT of their classes.

Back in the days of rocking and reeling,
when mobiles were things that you hung from the ceiling. When woodwork and pottery got taught in schools,
and everyone dreamed of a win on the pools.

Back in the days when I was a lad,
I can't help but smile for the fun that I had.
Hopscotch and roller skates; snowballs to lob.
Back in the days of tanners and bobs.



“ABOUT PEOPLE”

As we go to print we have heard that unfortunately **Tracy Holden** has developed a problem with her back again and is currently in Salford Royal Hospital. There was thought of a spinal operation but it is now looking more likely that physiotherapy and pain killers may suffice. We all wish you well Tracy and trust you will be home again soon.

Rather belatedly, we sadly announce that **Olive Backhouse** (nee Siddall) passed away in January this year, aged 87 years. Olive's parents used to have a confectionery shop on St Mary's Gate at the top of Blackwater Street. Olive had lived up in Thirsk for some years but she would occasionally attend worship at church when visiting Rochdale.

Eulogy to Donald Smith

So as we turn our thoughts now to remembering Donald, we take time to recall who he was as a person and the life he lived; a life lived well and shared with his wife Eunice for the last 67 years. As the year 1922 rolled in, so too did Donald, he was a new year baby! And with every new year comes the optimism for being the best we can, and in talking to Donald's family I think that would be a fair summary of who he was; he was hardworking, supportive and he was kind.

Donald was born in Rochdale at Springhill hospital, as too was his sister Peggy who sadly died a number of years ago. He was educated locally, attending Rochdale Boys Grammar School from which he gained exemplary school reports, that described him as being diligent and a very polite boy. After leaving school he worked for Turner Brothers before he was called up to the war effort; a job he was to return to at the end of the war. He was firstly conscripted to the Royal Artillery and then later served in the Middlesex Regiment as a tank driver. And from an unattributable source, his tank driving skills may have been the nod for him being handed a driving licence!

A few years into his working career, Donald took up a position in the transport offices in Rochdale, where he worked until retirement. It was here that he and Eunice met.

I don't know if eyes met over a filing system but by 1953, they were married.

Stuart seemed very keen to tell me he was at their wedding so I feel obliged to include this detail, although he quickly clarified that he was a babe in arms at the time!

As a young boy and into his married life, Donald

attended the Methodist Church but latterly he more often attended Rochdale Unitarian Church in support of Eunice, for special services and social events.

Among his interests were card games, which were a regular feature of Rochdale Church's social scene. He and Eunice also enjoyed many years of playing Bridge at various other locations around Rochdale, and having heard about his outstanding memory, I can believe what a good player he would be. Perhaps best to have him on your team than playing against you!

Donald loved jazz music too and made frequent trips to Bridgewater Hall to hear some big names such as Acker Bilk and Kenny Ball.

He and Eunice also enjoyed walking in the Lake District and walking on holiday in Switzerland. Over the last 20 years they also enjoyed frequent holidays at Grange Over Sands. Talk of holidays, brings to mind their trips to Bielefeld in Germany, Rochdale's twin town and the place where they were to make lifelong friends. Incidentally Bielefeld was also the city where Donald was demobbed from at the end of the war, how interesting that he should return there later in life.

The most prominent interest in Donald's life was definitely anything to do with transport though, trams trains or buses he knew them and he knew how to get about on them. If you needed to get from A to B, Donald could give you the route, the bus number and the timetable without consulting a thing, he knew them all. The memory he had for such information was outstanding.

Maps too were a huge interest, both studying them and drawing them, so I doubt with Donald around anyone would ever get lost!

Above all though, Donald was a peaceable man who didn't make a fuss, he just got on with life. A quality that probably endeared him to the carers who came to visit him in more recent times, apparently, they loved coming to see him.

Yes, he was a private man and thoughtful with it, but on occasions his dry sense of humour would give him away.

Donald was such a presence of support to Eunice. And between them they have been a source of support and kindness to many, and especially through difficult family events. Donald's love and care for Eunice made the few occasions they were separated from each other quite difficult times, and no one was more delighted than him for them to be reunited. Those times of separation were for hospital visits, but not his, from the day of his birth up until last year, Donald had never been in hospital. The doctors were astonished!

Between that, and the fact that he reached the age of 98 years, I think he must have been made of something pretty special.

TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF BRIAN NUTTALL

Brian was born in Rochdale, with older sister June and younger brothers Keith and Carl. Another brother John, was rather tragically a still-born baby.

Growing up, Brian and June both enjoyed the active social scene at Rochdale Unitarian Church, Brian's main interest being cricket. It was at the church where he first met Irene, who would become the love of his life.

Brian's later education took place at a private college in North Yorkshire, where he embarked on a radio operator's course for the merchant navy. Having successfully completed years 1 and 2, he had signed up for a third year but, in the meantime he was conscripted into the army and despatched to Scotland as a vehicle mechanic. At this point his relationship with Irene was developing and she would visit him in Scotland with one of his pals.

Living conditions for army conscripts at that time were pretty poor and, unfortunately Brian contracted TB resulting in him being medically discharged from the army. The generally accepted treatment for TB was plenty of fresh air but, with the blessing of his father, Brian was also placed on a trial for another potential treatment with the drug streptomycin. It is now known that this drug can affect kidney function, so it may well have been a contributory factor in the necessity for the dialysis treatment Brian required in recent years.

Because of his illness, Brian spent 3 years in a Scottish hospital. The family still have embroideries he spent time working on during his stay there, and he spoke of the fetes which were held through the donations of local businesses.

Close friends Jean and Colin Westerman tell how on one occasion they, with Irene and her mother visited Brian, travelling by night coach to Glasgow and then by tram to where Brian had obtained lodgings, with a lady in a block of high rise flats. They stayed two days and then embarked on the long journey home, returning by coach to Rochdale - now there's devotion for you !

Along with her mother, Irene continued to visit Brian, managing to obtain restricted train tickets with the help of the Red Cross. Indeed it was through money raised by the Scottish branch of the Red Cross that in 1945 brought about the purchase and extension of this hospital to ensure the best treatment for men and women of the Armed Forces and Merchant Navy who had contracted tuberculosis. Ten years later in 1955, having achieved its original aim, the hospital was presented to the people of Scotland for general use.

Quite recently, Brian needed a chest X-ray and this was carried out by a trainee. On seeing it the tutor instructed that it must be repeated as it was missing part of a lung. Naturally Brian was rather amused, as he had actually undergone surgery to remove diseased lung tissue.

Brian married Irene in 1954, honeymooning in Austria, where they often returned for walking holidays. Their marriage was a strong and loving one and lasted very nearly 66 years. They were proud of, and enjoyed a happy family life with their two children, Valerie and David.

A keen golfer, Brian's family, along with fellow players and their families, would go for days out, enjoying such simple activities as wimberry picking,

season permitting. In addition to walking in Austria, Wales and the Lake District, the family would also spend holidays with Brian's parents, who lived in Watford and later in Devon. Brian's father had a diverse business with coaches - cars for weddings and funerals - car sales - repairs and petrol pumps. Valerie recalls the adventure of negotiating narrow Devon country lanes in grandad's Rolls Royce, with other drivers invariably giving way to them.

Reminiscing recently, the Westerman's also confirmed the wonderful times spent with Brian and Irene - walking, bowling, eating out, playing cards, Speedway at Belle Vue on Saturday nights and the memorable holidays together - Paignton, Ilfracombe, Newquay, Malta, Brittany and Austria to name a few.

Brian had a fairly varied working life, initially delivering Corona drinks to retail outlets before becoming Manager for a slot TV company. As times changed, he took up market trading - at first selling wallpaper, then children's clothes and finally greetings cards.

For relaxation his love of music came to the fore. He particularly enjoyed watching Eisteddford. In fact he would watch many Welsh musical broadcasts, often with subtitles - so much so that family would tease him, asking if he was learning a new language.

Considering his earlier period of poor health, Brian did exceptionally well to live such a long and fruitful life. Amazingly, in just 4 days time, he would have reached the grand age of 90 years. But ironically he was not to experience that celebration - just as he and Irene were to miss out on their 66th Wedding Anniversary by a matter of 3 weeks. There is little doubt that Brian found life without Irene beside him quite simply too much.

In summing up, Valerie and David felt that this anonymous poem, best highlighted their father's philosophy towards life:

Not how did he die, but how did he live?

Not what did he gain, but what did he give?

These are the units to measure the worth of a man, as a man, regardless of birth.

Not, what was his church, nor what was his creed?

But, had he befriended those really in need?

Was he ever ready, with words of good cheer,

To bring back a smile, to banish a tear?

Not, what did the article in the newspaper say,

But, how many were sorry when he passed away.

Relating very much to that poem, and in a sense confirming its authenticity, are words I have extracted from an email Valerie received from Nadia, one of their near neighbours:

"When I heard your Mum had passed away, I told my family that your Dad wouldn't survive without her. I had seen his love towards her. I wish my husband adored me in the same way. He was such a great person - I remember how he was worried for our family and hugged me when news reports showed the killing of Muslims in some other country. Some days later he saw me in the library and apologised for hugging me, saying he realised afterwards this was not appropriate behaviour in our religion.

I also remember that when I visited Pakistan, he called at the house to ask if I was ok as he had not seen me around. He was such a considerate and caring person - full of life and joy and respect, and I will miss him so much." What more would one wish to add to that?

EVENT DATES 2020

Date	EVENT
10 Oct	Autumn Lunch
21 Nov	Film Night
05 Dec	Christmas Lunch
06 Dec	2020 Toy & Gift Service

PLEASE NOTE:

Unfortunately, due to the current restrictions, events and services at church are postponed.

Above are some important calendar dates from Oct onwards. We are currently planning a revised calendar.

In the meantime, updates will be posted on our website, Facebook page and in our bi-weekly newsletter

Reminder —: Donation Envelopes!

A reminder from our Treasurer, John Illingworth, that if any of you have donations at home that you would have given during the offertory or in the collection box at church, could you please contact either John, Helen or myself, using the details below, and we will arrange to safely collect your donation. Many thanks!

Helen & John Illingworth Tel: 01706 649015

Email: helen@illingworth.org.uk

Email: john@illingworth.org.uk

Paul Hubbard Tel 07884 123 169

Email: rochdaleunitarian@outlook.com

Church Answerphone - 01706 648461

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Rochdale Unitarian Church

Clover Street

ROCHDALE OL12 6TP

01706 648461

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